

# **ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS**

## **Annual statement to the Independent Press Standards Organisation 2014**

# **1. Factual information**

## **1.1 Overview**

A division of Daily Mail and General Trust, Associated Newspapers is one of the largest publishers of national newspapers and news websites in the UK. The company pioneered popular journalism in Britain with the launch of the Daily Mail in 1896, the country's first mass-circulation newspaper. More recently its continuing commitment to delivering quality journalism in an accessible way to a broad audience has been marked by the launches of The Mail on Sunday (1982), Metro (1999) and MailOnline (2003). The company also publishes the Irish Daily Mail, Irish Mail on Sunday and evoke.ie website in the Irish Republic, the Elite Daily news website in the USA, 7Days newspaper in Dubai, and has a part-share in Mail Today in India. MailOnline is now a global news website with independent editorial operations in the USA, Australia and India.

## **1.2 List of Titles**

The Associated Newspapers titles regulated by IPSO are:

*Daily Mail (Circulation area England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Average circulation including Scotland and Ireland Sept-Dec 2014 1.7 million)*

*The Mail on Sunday (Circulation area England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Average circulation including Scotland and Ireland Sept-Dec 2014 1.52 million)*

*Scottish Daily Mail (Circulation area Scotland)*

*The Scottish Mail on Sunday (Circulation area Scotland)*

*Metro (Distribution in major cities and suburban areas in England, Scotland and Wales. Average circulation Sept-Dec 2014 1.34 million)*

*MailOnline (all content relating to news events in the UK) (Global audience. Global monthly unique visitors December 2014 199.41 million)*

*Metro.co.uk (all content relating to news events in the UK) (Global audience. Global monthly unique visitors December 2014 26.87 million)*

It is also worth noting the estimated numbers of stories published by our titles during this four-month period:

Daily Mail (including Scottish Daily Mail)	27,200 stories
Mail on Sunday (including Scottish Mail on Sunday)	7,200
Metro	12,480
MailOnline (Global)	80,993

Metro.co.uk (Global)	15,661
Total (all titles)	143,534

The figure for numbers of stories published places in context the number of complaints resolved under IPSO rules during this period, across all titles, which was 102, or 0.00071 per cent of stories published.

### 1.3 Responsible person

Associated Newspapers' responsible person is Peter Wright, Editor Emeritus.

## 2 Editorial standards

### 2.1 Overview.

Associated Newspapers has always been committed to upholding the editorial standards enshrined in the Editors' Code of Practice. The Editor-in-Chief is chair of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee, of which the Editor of The Mail on Sunday was also in 2014 a member; the CEO is chair of the Regulatory Funding Company; and the Editor Emeritus is a member of the IPSO Complaints Committee.

Compliance with Editors' Code, Data Protection Act 1998 and Bribery Act 2010 is a requirement written in to all journalists' contracts.

Whenever there are changes to the legal and regulatory framework within which our journalists work we ensure they are informed and, where necessary, undergo training to guarantee they understand and comply with new requirements.

Following the Information Commissioner's 2006 reports *What price privacy* and *What price privacy now* the Editor-in-Chief and Editor of The Mail on Sunday banned all use of private inquiry agents. All journalists received training in the 2010 Bribery Act, and procedures were put in place for approving and monitoring payments for information.

In October 2011 all our newspapers introduced regular corrections and clarifications columns, carried on page two.

Prior to the launch of IPSO we conducted a complete review of our complaints procedures and took a number of steps:

- (a) We appointed a Readers' Editor, a qualified lawyer who is not a member of our editorial staff, to assess and, where possible, resolve complaints to our newspapers.

(b) We created an automated complaints management system to ensure all complainants have access to the Editors' Code and assistance in making a complaint, and complaints are logged, acknowledged and outcomes recorded.

(c) We published our Complaints Procedure (See Appendix 1).

During the period covered by this statement all staff were required to attend 'Getting Ready for IPSO' seminars, given by the Editor Emeritus and instructing them in the more rigorous regulatory regime introduced by IPSO (see section 4.1).

All Associated titles employ managing editors (two for the Daily Mail, one for The Mail on Sunday, three for MailOnline and one for Metro) with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Editors' Code and resolving any alleged breaches.

All journalists are required to seek advice from managing editors and/or the editorial legal department in respect of any journalistic inquiries or proposed stories which may raise issues under the Editors' Code or the law.

During the period covered by this statement the editorial legal department employed six full-time lawyers and one part-time. An in-house lawyer is present until the daily newspapers go to press, and additional cover is provided by rota lawyers during the evening for the Daily Mail and Metro, and two rota lawyers for The Mail on Sunday on a Saturday. All the editorial content of the newspapers is read before publication by either an in-house lawyer or a rota lawyer.

Two in-house lawyers are embedded with MailOnline and Metro.co.uk and work shifts to provide cover between 8am and 10pm. Editors select content for legal advice pre-publication, there is constant dialogue between editors, journalists and lawyers, and lawyers monitor content as it is published. A rota provides legal assistance overnight.

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## 2.1 Guidance from IPSO.

All desist notices received from IPSO are circulated to all relevant journalists, and placed on the legal warnings database. Following a 2013 PCC adjudication <http://www.pcc.org.uk/cases/adjudicated.html?article=ODY2OA==&type=>, in which it was discovered a journalist had failed to consult the database before making inquiries, the need to check desist notices was made a key point of the Editor Emeritus's seminars and measures were taken to improve access to the database, and its search functions.

On receipt of desist notices managing editors will occasionally speak to IPSO's Director of Operations, either to seek clarification, or to check whether the notice relates to any activities of Associated journalists.

More rarely, from time to time managing editors speak to IPSO's Director of Operations or her Executive for guidance on Code issues. Practice varies a little from title to title, according to the nature of the material they publish. The Daily Mail would generally only seek guidance on the application of the Code, or helpful precedents, without reference to a specific story. The Mail on Sunday may give some detail of a particular story or picture. MailOnline and Metro do not normally seek pre-publication advice from IPSO.

Similarly the IPSO Executive will occasionally contact a managing editor regarding a story they believe one of our titles might be about to publish, and draw his/her attention to potential Code issues.

In either case IPSO's Executive invariably make clear that any advice they give is only for guidance and not for official clearance. They always point out that the complaints committee would ultimately rule on any complaint and they may well take a different view to that offered by the executive. The decision to publish rests with the Editor alone.

## 2.2 Verification of stories.

We are very aware that across the industry 90 per cent of all complaints are about accuracy, and our titles are no exception. The measures that need to be taken to verify stories were spelled out in detail in 'Getting Ready for IPSO' seminars. They were also distilled into a Pocket Guide given to all seminar attendees and a formal step-by-step Verification Policy which was distributed to all journalists by managing editors (Appendices 2 and 3).

## 3 Complaints handling

### 3.1 Forms in which complaints are accepted.

All our titles have very large, broad-based readerships and, unsurprisingly, we receive complaints in many different forms, about a wide variety of issues. For this reason we offer a range of avenues for complainants: *(Please note this section gives Daily Mail web and email addresses; there are parallel web and email addresses for our other titles).*

**(a) IPSO.** The most frequently used avenue for complaints is IPSO. Complainants go directly to IPSO and are then referred to us.

**(b) Readers' Editor.** Readers who prefer to make a formal complaint under the Editors' Code directly to us are encouraged to do so via an automated complaints form which is hosted on a dedicated web page [www.dailymail.co.uk/readerseditor](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/readerseditor). Here they are given full information about the Editors' Code, details of our Complaints Policy, and easy-to-follow instructions on how to formulate a complaint. This route is prominently displayed on page two of our newspapers and the UK news page of our websites.

**(c) Corrections.** We are aware that some readers may want to take issue with a simple issue of accuracy, which may not be a significant inaccuracy under the Code, or for a variety of reasons may not wish to engage in a formal process. We therefore offer in parallel with the Readers' Editor service an informal email route through [corrections@dailymail.co.uk](mailto:corrections@dailymail.co.uk). It is publicised in the same way. If these complaints engage the Code in any way we record them with formal complaints.

**(d) Contact Us.** Some readers who use the Readers' Editor service realise, on reading the Editors' Code, that the matter which concerns them is not a Code issue, but a question of taste and decency, an opinion they wish to express, or something they simply wish to make known to us. Others may decide, having looked at the IPSO process, that they would rather not make a formal complaint. We therefore offer, on the landing page of the Readers' Editor web page, a second informal route called Contact Us. As with Corrections complaints that arrive by this route do nevertheless sometimes engage the Code, in which case they are recorded as formal complaints.

**(e) Email/Letter.** Some complainants prefer to complain in writing directly to the editor or journalist involved. Where these complaints engage the Code they are recorded with other formal complaints.

### 3.2 Handling of editorial complaints.

Due to the very different nature of newsprint and digital publishing, there are some differences between the way our print and web titles handle complaints.

**(a) Newspapers.** Daily Mail and Metro complaints are assessed in the first instance by our Readers' Editor, who is a qualified lawyer, not employed on any of newspaper's editorial staffs, and who makes an independent assessment of whether the complaint raises any issue under the Code. If she finds there is no breach she writes to the complainant explaining carefully how she has reached her decision. In some cases - inaccuracies which are not significant, for instance - she will seek to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is more serious and likely to go to IPSO for a ruling, she will pass it to the relevant managing editor. Mail on Sunday complaints follow a similar process, but are generally handled from the outset by the newspaper's managing editor.

**(b) Websites.** The much larger volume of content, and the speed with which it is published, makes websites more open to complaint than newspapers. At the same time continuous 24-hour publication means inaccuracies can be corrected immediately and permanently, sometimes within minutes of publication. Speed is of the essence, and for that reason online complaints go directly to managing editors, who try wherever possible to resolve them while the relevant story is still on the home page. If that can't be done they will engage with the complainant and IPSO in the same way as the newspapers' managing editors.

### 3.3 Keeping of records.

All complaints that are submitted via the complaints management system are recorded electronically. Complaints that are framed under the Code and are submitted by letter or email independently are also entered into the system, as are complaints referred by IPSO. When complaints are resolved key information is transferred to a central register which records the name of the complainant, nature of the complaint, Code clause raised, outcome, remedial action (if any), and time taken to resolve.

### **3.4 Resolution of complaints.**

One of the major differences between IPSO and the PCC is the introduction of the rule that complaints must be referred first to the publisher, who must try to resolve them within a 28-day period. This gives publishers a strong incentive to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, and we have reviewed our approach to complaint handling to meet this requirement effectively. The result is that the average time taken to resolve complaints during this period was 6.8 working days, compared to the PCC's published average of 49 working days.

We are firmly of the belief that prompt resolution of complaints is one of the major benefits of the IPSO system and make strenuous efforts to reach settlement within 28 days wherever possible. This means we resolve a much greater proportion of complaints ourselves than under the PCC system. This is reflected in the tables provided in Section 5.

### **3.5 Information provided to readers.**

All readers using our automated complaints service are given full details of how to make a complaint and our Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Procedure gives an outline of how IPSO handles complaints, and encourages potential claimants to visit IPSO's website for further information. (Appendix 1) The automated complaints service is publicised on page two of our newspapers and the news page of our websites (Appendix 4).

## **4 Training Process**

### **4.1 Details of training programmes**

Between July and December 2014 all staff and regular freelances working in the UK were required to attend one of a series of 27 'Getting Ready for IPSO' seminars (including four in Glasgow for Scottish staff), given by the Editor Emeritus. Content varied slightly depending on those attending, but the subjects covered are summarised in Appendix 5. Each attendee was given a wallet-sized copy of the Editors' Code and 16-point Pocket Guide (Appendix 2).

Many of our journalists have also received initial training through our Journalism Training Scheme. This took 33 trainees in 2014-15 and has been expanded to 54 in 2015-16. Full details of the current course are given in Appendix 6.

In addition to this, MailOnline and Metro.co.uk hold internal induction sessions on key topics for new members of staff, as well as hosting regular seminar sessions updating all staff on relevant complaints and their outcomes.

#### **4.2 Numbers taking part**

990 staff and freelancers attended the Getting Ready for IPSO seminars. Exemptions were made for those working in areas very unlikely to generate complaints, on maternity leave, or working abroad. All other staff were expected to attend.

#### **4.3 Plans for further training**

During autumn 2015 the Editor Emeritus will give a new series of seminars for all staff, provisionally entitled How IPSO Interprets the Code.

We have also arranged for a statistician from the Royal Statistical Society to give a short series of seminars on how to interpret statistics. This is for journalists who regularly work with statistics.

## **5 Compliance**

#### **5.1 Complaints ruled on by IPSO**

During this period IPSO ruled on three complaints against Associated Newspapers titles. They were:

0048-14 Adams v Metro. Not upheld

03091-14 Clark v MailOnline. Upheld

01482-14 Clark v The Mail on Sunday. Not upheld

IPSO mediated four complaints without making a determination on whether or not there had been a breach of the Code:

01210-14 Reynolds v Metro

02101-14 Khan v Daily Mail

00878-14 Achranoviciute v MailOnline

01833-14 Solomon v Daily Mail

IPSO also adjudicated, or resolved, without making a determination on whether or not there had been a breach of the Code, 13 complaints about stories published before the launch of the launch of IPSO on September 8, 2014. These were considered under PCC rules (please note the PCC listed MailOnline complaints as 'Daily Mail' even if the story concerned had not appeared in the newspaper):



Portes v Daily Mail. Adjudicated sufficient remedial action.

Waite v Daily Mail. Resolved

LaRue v Daily Mail. Resolved

Lee v Daily Mail. Resolved

Leach v Daily Mail. Resolved

Fenton v Daily Mail. Resolved

Moyce v Daily Mail. Resolved

Handley v Daily Mail. Resolved

Prescott v Daily Mail. Resolved

Jirehouse v Mail on Sunday (You). Resolved

Banc de Binary v Mail on Sunday. Resolved

Vickers v Scottish Daily Mail. Resolved

McKelvie v Scottish Daily Mail. Resolved

## **5.2 Steps taken to respond to adverse adjudications**

Clark v MailOnline involved an unfortunate error made by a freelance reporter working his final shift, which concerned the insertion of an incorrect picture and caption to an otherwise accurate article. A warning was sent to staff about the importance of not conflating hearing dogs in general with hearing dogs supplied by the charity Hearing Dogs for the Deaf.

We also issued warnings to staff following the not upheld ruling in Adams v Metro, about the need to distinguish carefully between 'Asian' and 'Muslim' as descriptors in articles and images.

In another complaint, Riches v MailOnline, which was resolved by agreement with the complainant, we nevertheless felt the original complaint had not been dealt with in the way we expect of our staff. Those responsible were disciplined and a warning was issued to MailOnline staff that any complaint which cannot immediately be resolved must be referred straight away to the Managing Editor.

Bobin v Daily Mail was also resolved by agreement with the complainant, but a warning was sent to staff about the need to take care under clauses 3 and 9 when publishing historic pictures of individuals accused of crimes which include images of other people unconnected with the alleged crime.

Following the adjudication in the PCC legacy case Portes v Daily Mail we issued two warnings to staff about the importance of ensuring information published by the Office of National Statistics is properly understood and interpreted.

### 5.3 Details of other incidents

Any complaints which arrive outside the IPSO system are normally settled without admission of liability. Although they are investigated internally, they do not go through an independent process of investigation and adjudication, so it would be unfair to both the complainants and the journalists involved to offer a view on whether or not there was a breach of the Code in individual cases. In addition some complainants choose not to use the services of IPSO because they prefer to resolve their complaint with us privately, and we must respect that.

However we can supply the following details for complaints resolved under IPSO rules between September 8 and December 31, 2014. This list does not include legal complaints, or those resolved informally:

#### a) Complaints resolved under IPSO rules:

Total number of complaints resolved:	102
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*This figures includes:*

Number of complaints adjudicated or mediated by IPSO:	7
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Complaints referred by IPSO and resolved by us within the 28-day period:	29
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Clauses of the Code raised (some complaints raised more than one clause, none raised clauses 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 or 15):

1 Accuracy	83
2 Opportunity to reply	6
3 Privacy	16
4 Harassment	3
5 Intrusion into grief	10
6 Children	3
9 Reporting of Crime	3
12 Discrimination	12
14 Confidential sources	1

**Outcomes (internal determinations do not reflect an independent investigation and adjudication):**

Code not engaged (internal determination)	52
Code potentially engaged (internal determination)	37
Outside remit (internal determination)	5
Upheld by IPSO	1
Not Upheld by IPSO	2
Outcome mediated by IPSO	4
Suspended pending legal action	1

**Ways in which complaints were resolved (some complaints involved more than one action, an agreement to resolve a complaint does not necessarily mean there was a breach of the Code):**

Online article amended	36
Online article or picture removed	11
Correction/clarification published	33
Footnote added to online article	4
Letter published	3
Donation to charity	2
Private letter of apology	1
Meeting with complainant	1
Payment for use of picture	1
Agreement not to republish material	1
Outcome of court case to be reported	1
No remedial action required	26

**Complaints rejected by IPSO without referral to Associated Newspapers:**

71 (58 excluding multiple complaints)

**b) Complaints resolved under PCC rules:**

We can also supply figures for complaints about stories published before the launch of IPSO on September 8, 2014, and resolved during this period under PCC rules:

<b>Total number of complaints resolved:</b>	<b>31</b>
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**Clauses of the Code raised**

1 Accuracy	29
2 Opportunity to reply	2
3 Privacy	1
12 Discrimination	3

**Outcomes**

Code not engaged (internal determination)	7
Code potentially engaged (internal determination)	11
Outside remit (internal determination)	1
Resolved by IPSO under PCC rules	12

**Ways in which complaints were resolved**

Online article amended	9
Online article or picture removed	3
Correction/clarification published	21
Footnote added to online article	1
Statement published	2
No remedial action required	2